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**"Well, let's try this then, Ms. Copeland: Is there a plaintiff or a defendant in this case? Is somebody suin' somebody here?"**

Stephen J. Dwyer

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*“Well, let’s try this then, Ms. Copeland: Is there a plaintiff or a defendant in this case? Is somebody suin’ somebody here?”*

Stephen J. Dwyer\*

Professor Robert S. Hunt’s first-year real property class appeared intimidating enough, at first. Indeed, it had everything necessary to make first-year students cringe: an imposing subject matter (*Real* property—a concept which promised unfathomable, surrealistic follow-up courses in the second and third years); eight credit hours (“I’ll never get a job after this”); a seating chart (with students’ pictures on it, yet!); and a professor with—in order—a vest (“this guy dresses like Trautman”), a booming voice (the imitations were yet to come), a belief in the Socratic method (“Oh gawd, look at that seating chart”); and more letters after his name (A.B., A.M., LL.B., S.J.D.) than any normal guy would care to acquire. Things just didn’t look too promising.

It wasn’t long, though, until these initial impressions began to give way to newer ones. Fairly quickly, Professor Robert Hunt’s favorite reply to the unprepared student (“Well, is somebody suin’ somebody here?”) went through a transformation from scathing rebuke, to acerbic jibe, to amusing cliché. Bob Hunt, we came to learn, was a pretty nice guy.

Indeed, he was. More than any other instructor during my three years at the U.W., Bob Hunt cared about, and took an interest in, the welfare of the people in his classes.

Stories of Professor Hunt’s interest in his students abound. “Veritably from time immemorial” (to use Huntian phraseology) he was a regular spectator at intramural athletic events featuring law school teams. In fact, it became more unusual for a law school team to play a softball or basketball game without Professor Hunt in attendance than with him there, rooting them on. His presence at these events is probably, for most graduates, their most enduring memory of Professor Hunt.

Robert S. Hunt’s unique mixture of old-school formality and sheer friendliness did not only manifest itself at athletic events, of course. He took my securities regulations class to lunch at a French restaurant (given the subject matter, it was the least he could do, I thought at the time) and he was a regular at weekly T.G.I.F. beer drinking fests. Mine was not the only class which had occasion to dine on his “nickel” and several of his students found high-class and low-cost summer housing by spending summers in his

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home while he was away. In many ways, Professor Hunt went to great lengths in his efforts to learn about the lives and futures of the men and women he was teaching.

Over the course of three years, I somehow managed to take every course that Professor Hunt taught. This never ceased to amaze him, but I truly enjoyed his wit and the simple fact that he obviously gave a damn about the folks he was teaching. Today's U.W. students have lost more than an instructor now that Bob Hunt retired from teaching; they've lost a friend and an advocate.

In any tribute such as this, the author is called upon to summon up "the one thing" that separated his subject from that subject's peers. In this case, it isn't hard for me to do so. It is, however, illustrative. For there is one simple fact about Bob Hunt, one thing he did while I was a student that no other law school teacher would have contemplated doing, which will forever cause me to remember him more fondly than any other of my many excellent instructors.

Bob Hunt came to my wedding.